



February 22, 2022

Appropriations Committee
Legislative Office Building
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Alexandra V. Brennan, D.M.D.
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Lauren D. Presti, D.M.D.

Dear Appropriations Committee Members,

Our large pediatric dental group serves over 6400 children with dental Medicaid, accounting for one sixth of the children in Eastern Connecticut. We are a group of eight board-certified pediatric dentists with four office locations. For over 40 years, we have provided a dental home for over 13,000 Husky patient visits per year.

We have several concerns and challenges to address in order to continue to provide the highest level of quality services to this high-risk population, who present with over 80% of severe early childhood caries of our total office population.

1. These children present with the highest level of dental disease resulting in an increase in oral infections, pain, need for complex restorative treatment, and missed school days..
2. We have had to limit our total practice participation in HUSKY to less than 30%.
3. There has not been a fee increase or cost of living compensation in dental Medicaid reimbursement for over 14 years, since 2008.
4. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, we have had an additional increase in office overhead due to the increased costs of PPE, infection control, restorative materials, economic inflation, and increases in staff salary. This has resulted in XIX reimbursement of under 45% of our fees.
5. For all the reasons mentioned above, most of the local dentists and dental specialists in our community have stopped participating in the Title XIX program for children. This has resulted in complete overload to our system as well the University of Connecticut and Yale Pediatric Dental Residency Programs. In turn, this has created a dilemma of access to dental care in our state.

We have always taken care and provided our services to the underserved pediatric population in our community. The continued financial pressures and challenges mentioned above have forced us to re-evaluate our ability



to continue to provide the highest standard of care. In the upcoming legislation for the proposed 25% increase in adult dental Medicaid fees, please also consider increasing the children's dental Medicaid fees that continue to be so low.

Sincerely,

Steven D. Ureles, DMD, MS, MSc.
Life Diplomate, Fellow AAPD,
Fellow International College of Dentistry,
Fellow Royal Academy of Medicine

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